

ACTIVITY 9

STEMS



Key Ideas

Some stems of plants can be eaten, e.g. celery, water lily and rhubarb. Stems have a particular function for each plant. Stems carry water and minerals to the leaves.

Work Requirements

Students will:

- investigate the function of plant stems
- observe and compare stems of different plants
- identify bush foods that are stems.

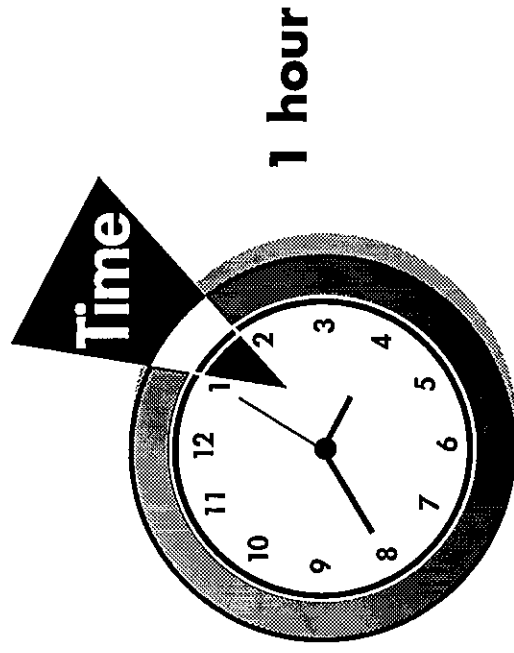
Teacher Preparation

Collect some stems of different plants. Include stems that are eaten and those that are not.

Try to include stems from local plants. Locate stems that are used as traditional food.

Materials

Task Card 4
4 different stems



Student Tasks

FOCUS

Class: Look at the stems.
Why do you think plants have stems?

INVESTIGATE

Small groups: Do Task Card 4, The Stem System.

PROCESS DATA

Discussion: What happened to your celery?
Why do you think this happened?
Does this tell you what the function of the stem is?

EVALUATE

Discussion: In which direction do stems grow?
Which part of your body is like the stem of a plant?

USE SCIENCE

Class: Try to find some plants in your area with different stems.
Look at the stems.
How are the stems different?
How are the stems the same?
Do you think the stems still have the same function?

INVESTIGATE

Class: Find out if there are any traditional bush foods in which the stem is eaten.

Vocabulary

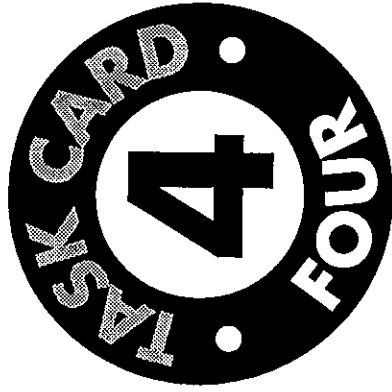
minerals
function
water lily
rhubarb
celery
stalk
stem
trunk



CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Involve local people in looking for stems that are used as bush foods.

Make a list of the names of the bush foods.



THE STEM SYSTEM

What You Need

beetroot juice or red food colouring
water
sticks of celery with leaves still attached
jar

What You Do

1. Put about 5cm of water into the jar.
2. Add the food colouring until the water is dark red.
3. Cut about 2 cm off the bottom of the celery stalk.
4. Put the stick of celery into the jar.
5. Leave for one day.
6. Look at the leaves of the celery.
What has happened?
How do think this happened?
7. Take the celery out of the water and cut another 2 cm off the bottom.
What do you see inside the celery?
Can you see where the water went up the stalk?